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UNION WITH THE CHURCH.

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UNION

WITH THE CHURCH,

THE

SOLEMN DUTY,

AND

THE BLESSED PRIVILEGE,

OF ALL

WHO WOULD BE SAVED.

BY

REV. H. HARBAUGH,

AUTHOR OF HEAVEN, OR THE SAINTED DEAD; THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION; THE HEAVENLY HOME; THE BIRDS OF THE BIBLE, ETC.

"He that hath not the Church for his Mother, hath not God for his Father."

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Second Edition, Revised.

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PREFACE.

THERE are a number of well-meaning persons who remain out of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Author has long believed that this is owing, not to a lack of sincere interest in religion, but almost wholly to difficulties which present themselves to sincere inquirers — difficulties which will readily vanish when properly considered. To such honest-minded persons, this little volume affectionately offers its aid.

It makes no abstruse theological pretensions, but is designed to meet difficulties as they actually exist in the minds of men. Its object is wholly practical.

This Treatise, in the former pamphlet edition, has had the good effect of convincing some, and of persuading them to unite with the Church. Pastors and Christian friends have been pleased to say, that it is well adapted, in its style and argument, to meet an existing want. At their request, it has been revised and published again, in a better dress; and it is devoutly hoped it may do good.

The Author would yet ask, of those into whose hands this little Book may fall, as a special favor, that they will be so kind as to lend it to thinking persons around them, who are yet out of the Church.

LANCASTER, PA., November 16th, 1855.

PART FIRST.

DIFFICULTIES REMOVED.

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Will You read this Little Book?

Introductory.

I take it for granted that you, who are just now commencing to read this little book, are a sincere person. You desire to do right, and to live right. You believe in the Bible, and in the Christian religion. You often meditate seriously on your prospects in regard to the eternal world. You desire to be honest and faithful with your own soul. I believe, therefore, that you will solemnly and candidly weigh the matter to which I desire to call your attention. Though I have never seen your face, and may never see it in this world,

yet I feel an interest in your comfort on earth, and in your salvation in heaven. It is this which impels me to write these things to you. Friend! please read this little book.

Have you ever made a public profession of religion? Do you belong to some branch of the Christian Church, as a regular member? If you do not, will you listen to me, while I endeavor to prove to you, that it is your duty, and the duty of all men, to connect themselves in a regular, public, and orderly manner with the Church of Christ?

You have no doubt often thought on this subject; and perhaps you have been more or less troubled in regard to it. It may be that you are at this moment undecided as to what you ought to do, or what you will do. This matter may have rested upon your mind for years, as has often been the case with others; for one year

hastens fast after another, and ten or twenty years of our life are quickly left behind, and soon old age and death threaten us. There is nothing that we are so apt to put off as coming to a decision on some religious matter. I once knew a man whose mind had been seriously exercised on the subject of his duty to unite with the Church for fifteen years! He delayed the solemn decision for so long a time. If this has been your case, I hope and believe that you will come to a speedy and a right decision, if you will read on, with a sincere desire to find the truth. Even if you have already decided never to join the Church, I still believe you will change your mind when you carefully consider this subject in its true scriptural light.

I can easily believe that you have delayed thus long for some reason which you consider a good one. No one acts without reason, unless he is intentionally wicked.

Those who are sincere and yet neglect duty, do it because they think they have found some reason which makes it proper for them so to do. The reason, then, why you have delayed, is because there is in your mind, some ground which you consider good, upon which you believe yourself justifiable. There is some difficulty in your way. When, either your own mind, or some person, or perhaps the Bible, urges this duty upon you, you meet the plea with some objections or difficulties by which you excuse yourself.

Let us consider these, and see whether one or other of the following objections do not keep you back. Let us see, too, whether they cannot be satisfactorily answered.

Now, I earnestly beg you not to lay this little book aside, but to read on with an honest desire to know what is your duty in the case. It is a subject of sufficient

solemnity to claim your most serious consideration. Shall you live and die out of Christ's Church? Oh! what momentous and eternal consequences hang upon your decision of this question!

I DO NOT KNOW WHICH CHURCH IS RIGHT.

The First Objection.

Here is your first difficulty. You say: There are so many churches—which is the right one, and which one shall I join?

We freely confess that the Church is divided into many parts, and we mourn over it. It is a great evil; and those who are the means of dividing it are certainly very guilty before God. Christ instituted only one Church, and it is His will that there should be but one fold, as there is also but one Shepherd—one body, as there is but one Head. One of the greatest evils

which result from the division of the Church is, that it keeps so many back from joining it. Therefore, to such as aid in causing its divisions, the solemn words of our Saviour must be applied: "Wo unto that man by whom the offence cometh!"

Grant, then, that the Church is divided, and that this is a great evil: it does not destroy it. The Church still exists; divided as the branches, yet still one as the tree. Any one who reflects charitably and earnestly on this subject, must confess that the Church can still exist, does exist, and is still one Church, under all these divisions.

We will endeavor to show that this is the case. The Scriptures compare the Church to a human body. Christ is the *head*. The Church is the *body*. We are the *members* of that body. Now, though these members are various in their posi-

tions and uses, they are still all pervaded by one life. The judgment of the head, and the emotion of the heart, may manifest themselves variously through the body and its members, yet the life of it is but one life. There may be various weaknesses and defects in the body and its members, which very much hinder it, but do not destroy its life. The eye may see dimly, the ear may hear faintly, the taste may be defective, and some of the limbs may be feeble; and yet all these do not entirely destroy the inner life of the man. They deface his beauty, enfeeble his strength, and make him less agreeable to others, but still he is a man. So it is with the Church; her divisions make her feeble, destroy her beauty, and hinder her efficiency, but do not destroy her existence.

Some branches of the Church are no doubt less pervaded with the life of religion than others. Some are more in error

than others—and this will also make some branches better than others; just as we sometimes see some branches of a fruit tree less fresh and growing than others. The fruit, on those branches which have least sap and life, will not be so good and beautiful and perfect as it is on others, and yet the life of the tree is in all, more or less. Or, comparing the Church to a soil, into which we are planted, and in which we are to grow, we may say, that plants in some soils grow less perfect than they do in others; and so it is with the Church. Those branches of it which hold most truth, which are nearest in all things to our Saviour, are the best—in them we will flourish most as Christians, yet we cannot deny that there may also be persons planted in other Christian soil, who also grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

The Apostle says of Christians, "Ye

are all one *in Christ Jesus.*" They are not, however, all one in *every* respect. It is not said they are one in views—one in doctrines—one in their ideas of Church government—one in their practices, customs and services—one in their feelings and experiences; but they are one in a deeper unity than any of these: they are one in the life, grace, and power of Christ Jesus. All that are His children in deed and in truth, are in Him—in Him they exchange their sympathies in true charity, and in Him they form a perfect unity. They are in Him as the branches are in the vine—in Him, as the members are in the body—in Him, as grafts are in the stem—in Him, as the roots of plants are in the ground, "rooted and grounded in Him" and growing up in Him to the full stature of men. Thus it is easy to see that outwardly they may differ in many respects, yet in the in-

ward, deeper life and power of religion, they are one in Christ Jesus.

Christians may differ to some extent in *doctrines*, and yet be Christians. What is a doctrine? The doctrines of the Scriptures which I hold, are the doctrines of the Scripture *as I understand it.* But I may "see only in part and know in part;" or I may see in a wrong light in some respects. It may be the truth which I see, and yet not the *whole* truth, or not *exactly* the truth. Another sees the same truth differently, or sees more of it than I do. That is *his* doctrine. Hence you see that two persons may hold the same doctrine, and yet hold it in some respects differently, The views of persons must vary as their intelligence varies. We may easily feel the power of a truth, even though we do not see the whole of that truth in all its relations and dependencies; even as we may feel the heat of the fire when we do

not see its light. Hence we are taught "*above all things* to put on charity." Did not even the Apostles differ in some points of doctrine, and yet they were all Christians? Acts 15: 1—2. Gal. 2: 11. Acts 11: 2–3. Acts 15: 36—41. These differences were about minor and outward matters—they could not see alike; but was there not an inward unity, which still bound them to each other and to Christ, notwithstanding all their outward differences?

Christians may differ *even in the manner in which divinely appointed ordinances are to be used*, and yet be one in Christ, and all in His Church. There may be a great variety of administration, without losing the substance of the ordinance itself. In regard, for instance, to the communion of the Lord's supper, the most solemn, important and interesting, of all the ordinances, there may be outward variety where the

life, grace, spirit, and intent of the ordinance is still retained. One branch of the Church, for instance, prefers to celebrate it in the night, and attaches to it the ancient *agapæ*, or love-feast, and even the Paschal lamb; others lay no stress on any of these things. One receives the emblems kneeling, another standing, and still another sitting. One uses unleavened bread, another attaches no importance to this matter and uses leavened. One breaks the bread, from a loaf, others use the wafer. One celebrates it monthly, another quarterly, and others annually. Any one who attends the celebration of this blessed feast, in the different branches of the Church, will discover variety and difference in great detail, in the outward administration; but would it be reasonable, would it be charitable, would it be scriptural, to say that, under any of these forms, it is not the Communion? Cer-

tainly not. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; and there are differences of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. 12: 4—6.

The same may be said of the Sacrament of Baptism. There is a great variety of administration as to the outward rite. — One prefers one mode, and another prefers another; but all agree that it is to be done "with water," and "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Who will say that the real substance of the sacrament is not retained under all this outward variety of administration? If outward exactness were required, in all particulars and details, it would have been so revealed. Just as in the Lord's Supper, we are told to eat bread and drink wine, but are not told whether we shall eat much or little, whether we shall do it sitting,

kneeling or standing, whether we shall do it by day or by night; so in baptism, it is to be "with water" and in the Triune name, but it is not said that much water or little shall be used; whether the person shall kneel, stand, or sit; whether it shall be applied three times or once.

Now we freely confess that such outward forms should never have divided the Church, and those who divided it on these accounts are guilty before God; yet we insist upon it, that the substance of these ordinances may be retained under this outward variety. Hence you are not justifiable in remaining out of the Church, because these differences of administration exist.

Christians *may differ also in their views of church government*, and yet all be in the Church, under all these forms. The very fact that Christians differ in what they consider the true form of church-government, is the best proof that no particular form is

distinctly, and absolutely, and unchangeably fixed in the Scriptures. That government and order shall exist in the Church, is clearly revealed; and this all admit; but what shall be its form, in all its details, is not revealed. The Church is not constructed like a house, all the parts of which are at once perfect in the plan; but it is like a tree, or human body, a living organism, which perfects its parts in the process of its own growth towards perfection. The life of the plant or tree remains the same, and yet its outward form is constantly changing. The Church is always represented as such—a living, progressive organism. It is never compared in the Scriptures to any thing that has not life. Even where it is compared to a house or temple, the Apostle violates the common use of metaphors, in order to make it living. Thus: "Ye also as *lively* stones, are built up a spiritual house." 1 Pet. 2:5. And

again we are told that in Christ "all the building fitly framed together, *groweth* unto an holy temple in the Lord." Eph. 2 : 21. Here we can easily see that the Church, as a whole, may have life for all, and carry power with her to govern, and yet the particular mode and manner of government may be more or less conditioned by circumstances. Thus the history of the Church is like a tree, whose outward shape is determined to a great extent from the place where it stands, and yet the inward life of the tree is ever the same, let it stand where it will, and let its shape be what it may. So in regard to the Church. It is in this respect in the Church just as it is in the State. Civil government is an ordinance of God; "the powers that be are ordained of God." It is not, however, the *form* of government which is divine, but the *power* by which this form is to be animated. — Some form must of course exist, but God

has not said which. The form may be an absolute monarchy, it may be a limited monarchy, it may be an aristocracy, it may be republican, democratic, or some mixture of any number of these; and yet, under all these forms, God gives to the regular officers divine right to govern, administer laws, reward and punish. So it is in the Church. The form may be Episcopal, Presbyterial, Congregational, or some mixture of any of these; and yet, under it, God gives the right to rule to those whom he has constituted office-bearers in the Church. We do not mean to say that all these forms are alike good, or that individual piety will flourish equally well under all of them; but we wish to say that a person may be a real Christian under any one of them; and that therefore no one has a just excuse in remaining out of the Church because of this difference and variety of form.

Christians *may differ also in their customs and forms of service in worship.* Some may make preaching most prominent; others may have more singing, more prayer. Some may be more formal, others more familiar and free. Some may be more quiet, others more spirited. Some may be more plain and simple, others more solemnly ceremonial. Some may worship under the magnificent Gothic arch, others in a farm-house, school-house, or grove; and yet all may worship Him who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Again we would not say, that some customs and modes of service are not better adapted to the true spirit of worship than others, yet we devoutly and charitably believe that among all these you may be a Christian. It is therefore your duty to connect yourself with that Church which, after a careful and prayerful examination, you believe to be nearest right, and among whom you believe

you can be most useful to the world and the Church, and in which you can make the best advances in holiness. Then serve your God and your generation in humility and love; and towards all others put on, "above all things," that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and which never faileth." The hull is not as good as the kernel, and the bark is not the tree, therefore despise not him who differs with you about outward things. Cultivate a deeper and more inward fellowship with Him. According to the Apostle's beautiful advice, walk with Him in "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." Eph. 4 : 2—3. Whenever you are tempted to narrow-hearted bigotry, call to mind the example of the Saviour. "And John answered and said, Master, we saw

one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us, is for us." Luke 9:49, 50. Are you not convinced, from these remarks, that though the divisions of the Church are an evil, yet they do not destroy the Church — that it still exists in all these divers branches — that it is still one in its deeper life and spirit, although some of its branches are more living than others, yet in any one of them, which you believe to be best, you may be a Christian — and that through it you may be connected with that kingdom of Christ which includes all saints, and *out of which* there are none which He acknowledges as his subjects.

If you still persist in keeping out of the Church on the ground of this excuse, then permit me to ask whether you are consistent with your own views in this respect.

Do you refuse to belong to a government, as a regular citizen, because there are different forms of government, and because all do not agree as to which is the best? Do you refuse to stand in connection, and to act in concert, with a political party, because there are other parties in politics? Yea perhaps you are a member of some benevolent society, though there are many other ones, having the same, or at least a similar, object in view. You hold certain views on subjects, though others hold different views on the same subjects. You do not cease the business in which you are engaged, because others do the same business in a different way. You perhaps even hope and strive in a certain way to get to heaven, though you know that others have different views on the same matter; why then do you refuse to join some branch of the Church, because there are others who differ, and choose to serve God in a way

that is not outwardly the same in every respect? Certainly this is not consistent —it is not a reasonable course of conduct. If we would do nothing till all would agree as to *how* it should be done, we would do little indeed. — We verily believe that, if you will carefully consider the matter in this light, you will be convinced that, to keep out of the Church because it is divided into different branches, is to do so without good reason.

You can certainly find one or the other of these branches of the Church near enough to what you believe right, according to the Scriptures, to permit fellowship with them. Use your judgment prayerfully, and then join in with some branch of Christ's kingdom on earth.

There are so many unworthy Professors.

The Second Objection.

There are so many bad professors of religion. There are so many belonging to the Church who are not fit to belong to it. There are many in the Church who would better be out of it. Many make a loud profession, take the communion, and pretend to be religious in the Church and on the Sabbath, who are worse than I am.

In some such form as this, an objection is expressed, and an excuse made, which is very common—perhaps more common than any other. You will certainly read on, while we examine this excuse; and if you see that it affords no good reason for your remaining out of the Church, you will cast it away.

First of all, then, we fully and freely confess that what you say is so. We make

this confession sadly, and in deep humiliation. We lament sincerely that it is true. We believe also that this is one of the greatest evils which afflict the Church. An enemy within can always do more injury than an enemy without. The very fact that it is the cause of keeping so many persons back from making a profession of religion, is one of the strongest proofs that it is a great evil. It is to those who are in the Church in form, but out of it in heart and life, that the Saviour's cutting reproof is administered: "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." — Matt. 23:13. Such persons are in very truth offences or stumbling-blocks—for this is the scripture meaning of the word offences—over which many of the world stumble into perdition, who, had not these been in their way, would have entered the kingdom. Hence

the Saviour says, "Wo unto *the world* because of offences!" It is the world, those who are in the world, that receive injury from such professors; because they are kept out of the Church by their unworthy conduct. "It must need be that offences come." In the present state of the world, so full of evil men, it must need be that in some instances men of wicked hearts will find their way into the Church, to the disgrace of religion — "But wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." What the weight is of this wo — the Saviour's wo — the "wrath of the Lamb" — will be found out by actual experience, when God shall judge them in that great day which will reveal the secrets of the hearts of men. How awful to perish as members of the Church! How awful from the very gate of Heaven to be cast down to hell!

Having now fully agreed with you that there are those in the Church who are a

disgrace to it, and who are very guilty in the sight of God on that account, we must still differ with you when you make this an excuse for remaining out of it. For—

1. You will agree that they are *not all* such who are members of the Church. While I agree with you that there are many bad professors, you will agree with me, that there are many good ones. This cannot be denied. We will venture to say that you can point out many among your acquaintances whom you believe to be sincere, humble, devoted Christians—such as live up to their professions, as far as it is possible for them to do in a world so full of temptation and evil, and who show themselves, in heart and life, as "Israelites indeed." You know some aged members of the Church, who have spent a long and steady life in devout service of God and man; of whom you will be constrained to say, as they sink into the grave, that good

men have fallen. You can also fix your mind on some among your acquaintances in middle life, who are devoting the full strength of manhood to God, in connection with the Church. You even know some in the bloom of youth, who have set aside youthful follies, and who are laying upon the altar of Christ, the first and warmest affections of their life, and who most devoutly and sincerely do "remember their Creator in the days of their youth." You must confess that this is so. Is it not more reasonable then, and much wiser, to imitate the examples of these, than to stumble at those who are unworthy, to the eternal injury of your own soul? It will do you no good, in the day of Judgment, to say that there were hypocrites in the Church. The question will be, are you among the good? It will be no comfort to be excluded from the heavenly kingdom ourselves, even if half of those in the Church shall meet the

same fate. It is our duty to be, and to do, like the good in the Church, and not like the unworthy. If there are only a few that are on the narrow way, let us see to it that we are among that number.

The very fact that there are so many who only say Lord, Lord, while they do not the will of our Father who is in heaven, makes it only the more necessary for others to profess religion in the right way. If many disgrace religion by a bad profession, so much more important is it for you and I to honor it by a good one. God and His truth need true witnesses before men, and if these witnesses are few, are not we so much the more called to stand out and witness for God and religion by a faithful and sincere profession? If the country is in danger, and there are many traitors among those who are set for its defence, then it is the more our duty to fall into the ranks as true men.

2. You demand too much, in asking that the Church shall be free from all unworthy professors. If you stand on that ground, you would not have joined Christ while he was on earth; nor would you have joined any of the Churches which the Apostles established, and to which they ministered. You know that there was one among the twelve, who betrayed him, who was a "thief," a "son of perdition," one for whom it had been "better if he had never been born." There was another among them, who denied him three times, and with "cursing and swearing." But this did not injure the rest of the disciples. They did not stand away from Christ on that account. They, though they were in such company by profession, were nevertheless as good men as ever lived. Christ, who knew their hearts — for He "knew what was in man,"—walked in their company, and He was not polluted by them.

How then can you sincerely say, that it is a good excuse for you not to join the Church, because there are now and then those who betray and deny Christ? No; the more false friends He has, the more reason is there why we should cleave to Him as true friends.

We find that in the apostolic Churches there were professors who disgraced their profession. Let any one read the Epistles, and he will find many allusions to persons who endeavored to hide the worst of crimes under the cloak of an outward profession of religion. At Rome there were those to whom Paul says: "The name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles through you." Rom. 2, 24. In the Church of Corinth there was one who was guilty of a crime that "is not so much as named even among the Gentiles." 1 Cor. 5, 1. In the same Church, while they met to partake of the Lord's Supper, they ran

into such extravagant excesses that the Apostle charges them with turning this solemn ordinance into a feast of gluttony and drunkenness. "One is hungry and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God!" 1 Cor. 11, 21–22. He also warns them against eating and drinking at the Lord's Supper unworthily, and plainly declares that some of them did so. "For this cause many are weak and sickly *among you*, and many sleep." v. 30. To the Philippian Church he writes in sadness, thus: "For many walk (that is with Christians by profession,) of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ." Phil. 3, 18.

When these unworthy professors were guilty of open and public crimes, they were expelled from the Church. This was the duty of the proper officers of the

Church; and it is still their duty. Perhaps you say, they do not perform this duty. If they do not perform their duty, that is their sin, and not yours. If these unworthy professors are outwardly regular, so that the discipline of the Church cannot take hold of them, though they are inwardly hypocrites, then they come under the Saviour's rule in the parable of the tares and wheat: "Let both grow together until the harvest." If we are only wheat, all will be right, even though we stand among tares.

It is very plain, then, to any reasonable person, that there were unworthy professors in the Church in the time of Christ, as well as in the apostolic Churches; but at the same time there were also good Christians among them. We do not hear that any persons refused, in that day, to join them on this account. The Church will exist, no doubt, to the end, as mixed—

there will no doubt be tares among the wheat at the dreadful hour when the last trumpet shall sound, and when God shall send forth the final reapers! Matt. 7, 22, 23.

What if we are in the Church among Judases, and "such as have a form of godliness but deny the power?" Our own example, if it is of the right kind, will only be the more impressive to others, even as stars shine more brightly the darker the night. The real beauty of a consistent religious life will be the better seen in us, in contrast with their evil works. In this way the wrath of man will be made to praise God, and it will be seen that He in infinite wisdom is

"From seeming evil still educing good."

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." In this view

how beautiful is the exhortation of the Apostle to you and to me: "Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the road." Phil. 2, 5. O let us seek to do this, let others do as they will.

3. We must not too uncharitably judge those who are professors of religion. We must not entirely condemn them because we discern imperfections and weaknesses in their life and conduct. Lord, are we not all dust and ashes? Who will cast the first stone at his erring brother? Alas! who art thou that judgest another so rashly — so severely? Oh! how beautiful is the prayer

> "The mercy I to others show—
> *That* mercy show to me."

We would not, in any degree, justify the failings of Church members; but we must ask in reason and in charity, that

they be not absolutely condemned as graceless children of Satan, except by one who is himself perfect. If this course is pursued, we feel sure that many, who are now so harsh in judgment, would silently withdraw without pronouncing condemnation, and the "weak brethren," who have fallen into sin would be left alone with the Saviour: who would say to them, "neither do I condemn thee: depart, and sin no more!"

In judging professing Christians, it must be remembered that their *faults and failings* are generally outward and public—they are seen on that side of their lives by which they come in contact with the rough and bewitching world—but their *penitence* is generally in secret. You see the inconsistency of a public act of wrong in them, which was perhaps committed in circumstances of peculiar trial and temptation, but you do not see the tears of penitence

which that same person sheds over his faults in secret. Your eyes are not upon him when in the solitude of the night he bemoans his failings, "makes his bed to swim," and "waters his couch with his tears!" No, you see him not in his closet, when he has "shut to the door;" and when, in bitter confession and penitence, he asks his "Father which seeth in secret" to pardon his offences! Thus, because you see only the outside, and that the worst side of his character, while the best is hid, you may do him wrong in judging him too severely. Condemn him not as a graceless man for a few outward acts of inconsistency, till you are quite sure that he does not mourn over them in secret, and pray for forgiveness to that Saviour with whom is forgiveness, and who, when he was asked how often we should forgive our brother, said: "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times

seven." Matt. 18: 22. See also Luke 17: 3–4.

There are great mistakes made in judging others, by not keeping this fact in view. There are many, for instance, who blame David for his great sin, and they do so rightly; but they are not so ready to give him credit for his sincere and humble confession of it, and for the deep penitence in which he turned to God for forgiveness in the 51st Psalm. So there are many who stumble at the errors of professors, and make it an excuse for remaining out of the Church, but never think of the "strong crying and tears," with which in secret they mourn over the wound which they have inflicted upon their own souls, and upon the cause of Christ. Is this just and right? Oh let us judge in charity, even of outward acts; and what is inward, let us leave that to Him "who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men," and before whom "all things

are naked and open." Above all, let us not neglect our own souls, and our own duties, because others are doing so.

4. You do not join the Church because there are so many bad and unworthy professors in it, but you do not act on this principle in other respects. Now, there are traitors in the nation — persons who break the laws, and who are unworthy of being called citizens; and when even they are not guilty of acts which deprive them of citizenship, they are nevertheless bad citizens, and a disgrace to the nation: and yet you do not, on this account, refuse to become a citizen—you do not refuse to belong to the nation, to place yourself under its laws, and to enjoy the privileges which it confers upon its worthy citizens, because there are traitors and unworthy citizens living in this great Republic.

There is much counterfeit money and much bad money afloat, but you do not on that account despise all money, count it an

evil thing in itself, and refuse to take that which is good.

Science has its blemishes, its defects, and there are many who disgrace it, by abuse in using it for unworthy purposes; and yet you do not, on that account, consider knowledge a bad thing in itself, and refuse fellowship with those who are honoring it with their love and devotion, and who are united for its promotion in the world.

Many families have bad and unworthy members—members who destroy its peace and comfort within, and who disgrace it before others; but you do not for that reason consider the family as evil, and refuse to make one in the family circle, and in the communion of domestic love.

Wheat, and all grain, has its tares, its defective growths, and its injurious mixtures in many ways; but you do not therefore consider grain-growing an evil thing —you do not cease to sow; and though

there are many farmers who are unworthy of that name, and who are a disgrace to the business, you are not, therefore, ashamed to be called by that name, and induced to desist from your regular pursuit of that business.

Are not these illustrations sufficient to prove that in refusing to rank yourself among the professors of religion because there are bad members in the Church, you do not act consistently—you do not act on this principle in other things. It would be foolish if you did. Is it not plain, then, that an evil spirit, and perhaps an evil heart, are deceiving you in persuading you to lean, with the eternal interests of your soul, upon an excuse which, even in an earthly point of view, is not only baseless but absolutely foolish. Oh! consider these things solemnly, and in the light of eternity. What will it profit a man if he lose his own soul, even if ten thousand professors of religion do the same?

You see that this objection to joining the Church, has no solid ground. As one who sincerely seeks the truth, you are bound to cast it forever away.

Religion does not consist in Outward Forms.

The Third Objection.

Some say, by way of excuse, that religion does not consist in outward forms, but in dispositions of the heart; and that therefore we can be just as good out of the Church as in it.

Here again we fully agree that religion does not consist in outward forms—that the mere form of belonging to the Church, does not make us Christians, and that piety must dwell in the heart in all holy dispo-

sitions and affections. But if you say that it is an excuse to remain out of the Church because religion does not consist in outward forms, and that we can be as good out of the Church as in it, then I must differ with you, and give you my reasons; and let me here again express the belief that, as an honest man, you will agree with me when you have given the matter a serious consideration.

First of all, then, I must say, that to belong to a Church is not merely a form. The ordinances of the Church are not mere forms. God, who has instituted them, is no formalist. He does not mock us, by calling us to engage in empty ceremonies. These forms are designed as means to bring us near to God. Through these forms He meets us and we meet Him. He is in these forms with His Spirit and His grace. They are His own transactions with men; and whenever we draw nigh unto Him

through them, He draws nigh to us *in* them. It is therefore wicked to say that what God has appointed as means and media of communication with Him are mere outward forms. True, we can use them as mere forms, as too many do, but that is not their design; and, if we use them rightly, they are more than forms to us.

Again: Those holy dispositions and affections of heart which make us acceptable to God are to be obtained by the use of the ordinances of the Church as means. It is God's order to give grace into our hearts in a certain way, and that way he has prescribed to us — this way requires us to use certain means. When we eat, for instance, we get strong; but it is not the mere form of eating which gives us strength, it is the food which incorporates itself with our system, that replenishes our strength; and yet the form of eating is absolutely necessary as a means. So it is in the use of the

means of grace; it is not the outward form which gives us grace, but it is through the use of it that God transmits grace into our souls. When Naaman was sent to wash himself seven times in the Jordan, that he might be healed of his leprosy, it was not the form of washing which was to cure him, but he was to be cured in the use of this means — and he was not cured till he did it. He thought the waters of Damascus might do just as well, but that was *his* way, not God's. So we may think that we can do just as well out of the Church, but that is *our* way and not God's. See II. Kings, 5.

The inward and outward in religion, are bound together, and God sustains the one by the other. The spirit needs the form, and the form needs the spirit. If the spirit is not there, the form is dead; and if the form is not used, the spirit departs. This truth can be seen everywhere. Everything

that lives on earth has both form and spirit. The tree has an unseen hidden life, but also an outward form. The limbs and the bark are not the tree; for without the inward life they would be dead; but it is equally true that the inward life could not exist if it were not for the outward form—the bark and the limbs; take these away, and the life will soon withdraw. Now so it is in religion; forms are not religion, but they are the outward signs of it, and they are necessary to it. If we take them away, the life and spirit of religion will not stay; no more than the life of a tree will remain in it when the bark and the limbs are taken away. Who is he that would be wiser than God? When He institutes forms and ordinances to bring us near to Him, who is he that says, we can be just as pious and acceptable to God without them? You will certainly yield this point.

I fear I could not Keep my Vows.

The Fourth Objection.

You say you would join the Church, but you have seen many join that have not lived up to their vows, and you fear it might be the case with you; and in this way you think you would commit more sin than by not joining at all.

We agree with you fully that it is a great sin to profess, and then not live up to our professions and promises. "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." Eccl. 5: 5. It is certainly a good precept which Solomon gives: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God." It is, however, not necessary that you should be rash in your promises; neither is it necessary

that you should vow and not pay. We are not to do like those who thus vow; but we are to make a deliberate profession, and then honor it by a holy walk; and for this God has pledged us His grace.

It is, moreover, certain that your remaining out of the Church does not increase your fitness; but every year lessens it. You are not to become holy and fit for heaven out of the Church, and then enter it merely for safe-keeping; but you are to enter it, that you may have access to those means of grace, and use those helps, by which you are to grow in grace. The Church, it has been well said, is not like a barn into which ripe sheaves are to be gathered, but it is like a garden in which plants are to be cultivated. On first entering the Church you will, of course, be weak in faith, mere babes in Christ; and there will be faintings and failings, and

stumblings; but these will gradually give way to strength and firmness. We have the promises of God to sustain us. In His house is bread from heaven, to strengthen us, and water of life to refresh us. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." 20 : 40, 31. As children, they will find in their Father's house protection, food, and encouragement. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." Ps. 92 :1 3. Out of the Church we are "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." As long as you are out of the Church, you are out of covenant with God, "aliens and strangers," and have no claim upon His blessings; and how, in that case, can you expect to have His favor; but in His Church, you

are entitled to all that He has promised to those who are in covenant with Him. In the Church, you are regarded as members of His family, "children and heirs." Now you have a right to hope, for He says to us: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple, in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2: 19–22. In such like assurances rests your hope — assurances which you only have in the Church.

That you shall come short in some things, through weakness, is almost certain. The holiest men of whom we read in the sacred Scriptures, were sometimes

drawn into evil by the power of temptation, and the strength of their own remaining infirmities. Even Paul was sometimes ensnared by the law in his members, which warred against the law in his mind: so that the evil which he would not, that he did. But God is merciful to the weaknesses of such as sincerely endeavor to be His. "We have not an High-priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities." Heb. 4 : 15. He will not cast us off for the first offence, when it is committed through weakness. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are dust." Ps. 103 : 11, 14. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ, the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John, 2 : 1.

From these remarks you will see that

the Church insures and promises us the needed grace, whereby we may go on from strength to strength. It is designed and adapted to assist us in overcoming our weaknesses. You see also that even if in some things we fail through infirmities, God will not on that account cast us off, but give us His grace that we may not sin again. Thus the Church is a nursery of piety. It is God's family, in which His children, weak and strong, are protected, encouraged and blest; and in which they grow up "unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4 : 13. The Church is His fold, from which if any one stray, He straightway "leaveth the ninety and nine" that are safe, that He may go after it and bring it back.

While it shows a good spirit to express an humble distrust in ourselves, and entertain a fear lest we should not be able to

keep our vows, we should not let this fear keep us out of the Church. This would be like refusing to go to a full table and eat, for fear that we might not be enabled faithfully to use the strength thus derived in the right way. We must begin to do our duty, and God will give us strength to go on in it. He gives us the promise of this beforehand, and He will give us the needed grace as fast as we go on in the way. This He has not only promised, but He has actually performed His word to thousands of them that have feared Him, and sought to keep his commandments.

I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

The Fifth Objection.

There are some who remain out of the Church, because they think they are not fit to join. I do not consider myself prepared,

or good enough; if I were a Christian, I would gladly join.

You have wrong views of the Church. If you are to get all you need to make you a Christian without the aid of the Church, what use is there of the Church? It is the same as if a hungry man, invited to a table, should say, If I were full and satisfied, I would then sit down and eat. The Church, like Christ himself, comes not to save the righteous, but sinners. It is for all who feel their need of Him. It is like an ark, those who would be saved, must come into it for that very purpose. They must not say, as the waters are gathering, If I were saved, I would enter it. No, enter it that you may be saved. The Church, as a mother, Gal. 4:26, is to give birth and spiritual nourishment to her children. The saints are born in her. Ps. 87:5. You are to be saved, not out of the Church, but in her.

If you would be a Christian, you must use the means; these means are in the Church. First of all, you must be well instructed in the things of religion. Place yourself under instruction. The truth is all-sufficient, when seriously attended to, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to convince you that you are a sinner, and by nature lost; and thus your desire for salvation will be deepened, increased, and rendered solid. You will become truly penitent. What are you to do now? You see that you are by nature lost: where is help and hope? Salvation is offered to you through Jesus Christ. You believe that He will save you, and you ask by what means? You hear that He has instituted a Church, in which are the means of grace, by which he prepares sinful men for heaven. You ask, how can I enter into this system of grace? The answer is, repent, believe, and be baptized. You are penitent — you

do belive—then, if you have not been baptized, submit to baptism. Thus you enter the Church, and into covenant with God. If you have been baptized in infancy, you are already a member, and under a solemn obligation to renew that covenant. Thus, in the Church, and in covenant with God, you have a right and a warrant to claim all the promises and blessings, and use all the means of grace. Thus you enter the Church as one who seeks salvation. Seeing your danger, and feeling the need of help, you enter the ark where alone there is safety.

The great question is, are you penitent for your sins? Do you feel the need of salvation? Are you willing and anxious to be saved? If so, you are ready to enter the Church. God is ready to make a covenant with you. He is willing to give you a place in His Church, and thus admit you

to the privileges which He has placed in it, and by the use of which you are to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ.

If you look into the Scriptures, you will find that all such as felt their need of a Saviour, and who believed that Jesus was the Saviour whom they needed, and who in humble faith accepted of Him, were immediately admitted into fellowship with the disciples, adopted and initiated as members of the Church, and had the privilege of using all the means of grace in it. Acts 2 : 37–47.

Are you willing to be saved; and are you anxious to use all the means instituted for that end? If so, then enter the Church. You will find the means of grace sufficient for you. Do you feel weak and unworthy? Of course you are so, having but just taken the first step. Of course you feel weak, being but a babe in Christ. So much the

more do you need the spiritual mother, to nurse and nurture you. The means to make you stronger are at hand: use them. Join in with God in a solemn covenant; profess Christ, at once, before men; walk with His people. "Then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord." Hosea 6 : 3.

You think that you need the same preparation to enter the Church, as you do to enter Heaven. This is a mistake. In the Church you are to be prepared for Heaven. The Church is the Lord's garden. The plants or seeds, that are put into it, are not ripe and ready to be gathered as soon as they are planted, so we are not yet ripe for Heaven, when we are planted into the soil of the Church; but we are in it to become such. As a seed will never become more than a seed, unless it is put into the soil; so we cannot become fit for Heaven, unless

we are planted into the Church. Grace has a small beginning. Christians are first babes before they become strong men. Babes that scarcely know anything of themselves, are on that account the more fit to be in the family; so babes in Christ, feeble as they may be, are fit subjects to be in the Church. The very feeling of want which infants have, shows how much they need a mother; so your sense of need and unworthiness, shows how much you need the Church. You will find, by blessed experience, that just what you need, will come to you by the right use of the means of grace. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God." Ps. 92 : 13.

I am Waiting on a Friend.

The Sixth Objection.

There are some who profess to feel the weight of the duty of uniting with the Church, but they defer it on the plea that they are waiting on some friend to join with them.

This plea looks, at first sight, plausible; for, the person upon whom they are waiting, may be a husband, a wife, a sister, a brother, a parent, or some intimate friend; and it is natural that there should be a desire to be joined, in such a solemn and important step, by those who are dear to us. Still this is not a sufficient reason for deferring a duty of such great moment.

1. Consider, you ought to move in this matter while God is moving you by His good Spirit. You feel it *now* to be your duty; but if you put it off, that feeling

may pass away, you may lose your anxiety.; and at last die out of the Church. It is the Spirit that works this willingness in you. It is He that so solemnly reminds you of your duty, and urges you by "a still small voice" to comply with it; but that Spirit will not always strive. When He withdraws His influences, you may be given over to hardness of heart.

2. When you delay this duty from year to year, you do not give the friend whom you expect to win to a profession, good proof of your sincerity and earnestness. Your delay shows your friend that you do not feel your own danger, out of the Church, and thus you encourage him in his own ease. The likelihood is that the longer you delay, the longer he will do the same.

3. It is not likely that your delay will win your friend. As it is easier to draw persons from good to evil, than from evil

to good, it is more likely that he will gradually win you to entire neglect, than that you will influence him to duty. Especially will you never be able to press his duty upon him by deferring your own.

4. You sin by delaying, when you are convinced of your duty. Your duty is to act, to go forward. By delaying, you sin against the light in your own soul; and the greatest of all sin is that which is committed against the light. Can your sinning on bring any good to your friend? Certainly not; it is a vain hope.

5. When you yourself are in covenant with God, you may expect that your example, your efforts, and your prayers will prevail more with God and with your friend, than now. The nearer you draw to God, the more hope you have of drawing your friend after you.

6. You may die soon. Life is uncertain—delay is dangerous. Will God jus-

tify you, if you die out of the Covenant, on the ground that you waited on a friend? No. Religion is to you a personal interest. You must act for yourself. Your friend cannot die for you, cannot appear before God for you. This you must do for yourself. Then why delay? Let your resolution be this: Let others do as they will, I will lay hold upon life eternal. Momentous interests depend upon your decision. See that you are right. See that you act in time.

I have endeavored to remove the difficulties which have stood in your way, and some of which have, no doubt, kept you thus far out of the Church. I hope you have read with a sincere desire to know the truth. Why should you not? You yourself are far more solemnly interested in this matter than any one else. If

you go down to the gates of death without that preparation which the Scriptures require, it is *you* that will be the loser in that dreadful failure! Let me ask you, then, to consider these excuses as solemnly as you would do upon a death-bed; and if you see that they are not sound, cast them now away forever!

PART SECOND.

ARGUMENTS PRESENTED.

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Will You read on?

I have shown that the grounds on which persons generally excuse themselves from uniting with the Church are not solid and sufficient. The discussion of the subject would not be complete if I did not also give the positive arguments in favor of a regular public profession of religion. I most earnestly ask you to read on with care, while I present you the reasons, one after another, why you should join the

Church. Permit me, at the beginning, to remind you, that if you have never made a profession of religion, *you* have the greatest interest in ascertaining whether it is your duty.

It is exceedingly strange that any one should for a moment doubt that it is a duty. It is so clearly reasonable and scriptural, that it seems to me any one who considers the matter seriously can come only to one conclusion. But the very fact that there are still so many who are out of the Church, and who have not hitherto been persuaded to enter it, is the best proof that it is still necessary to argue this point. Many, no doubt, are convinced, who still refuse to act; we sincerely hope such may see the duty so clearly as to be brought to an immediate decision. Oh, why do you not act promptly in such a short and uncertain life? "Why sit we here until we die?"

God has instituted the Church.

The First Argument.

It is your duty to join the Church because God has instituted it. It is of divine origin. If it were a mere device of man, a mere human society, having for its object mere earthly benefits, then we might consult our own convenience and taste in regard to it. But an institution, of which God is the author, leaves us no choice but to obey what it requires.

That the Church is a divine institution, no one will deny. Even in the Old Testament we find that God had his Church — "the Church in the wilderness." Acts 7: 38. He determined its order, appointed its officers, its ceremonies, its worship, and the way by which persons should enter it. He blest those who were faithful members of it, and severely punished those who for-

sook his covenant and his ordinances; and entirely cast those off, who would not submit to its requirements.

In the New Testament we see, on almost every page, that Christ came into the world to establish a Church or kingdom. Hence we read of the "Kingdom of God." This expression is often applied to the Church of God on earth. A kingdom must have subjects who stand in connection with it, and submit to its laws. That Christ established a Church, is evident from his own declaration: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I will build my Church:* and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16 : 18. This Church had its rules, to which all were required to conform. Hence the Saviour tells his disciples how they must proceed when a member shall trespass, or be guilty of any fault; they shall first speak to him privately, and

secondly take one or two witnesses, and if he still refuses to yield, they shall "tell it unto the Church." If he "neglect to hear the Church," then he shall be separated from them, and be to them as an heathen man and a publican. Matt. 18:15–18. Can any thing be plainer? The kingdom, or Church, which Christ established was not merely an internal one, consisting of piety in the heart; but it had an outward form, constituting a public society, to which persons were formally joined, and from which they were excluded, when they were guilty of faults worthy of exclusion.

Christ, then, is himself the author of the Church. He added members to it while He was upon earth. He is declared to be the "head of the Church." The Church is "His body." Eph. 1:23. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with

the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5 : 25–27. It is His design and desire that all should belong to it, be saved in it, and glorified with it in Heaven.

Can you doubt whether it is your duty to join? Did He institute it in vain; and after He "gave Himself for it," can you say that you can do as well without it? Oh, consider this matter again; and see whether you will not conclude that as "Christ also loved the Church," it is your duty to love it; and that as "He gave Himself for it," so it is your duty to give yourself to its service. Does *he* love Christ, who is willing to die out of His Church?

God enjoins it as a Duty.

The Second Argument.

He requires us to join the Church, by a public profession of religion, and enjoins it upon us as a duty.

This is evident from various considerations. He has instituted forms of admission into the Church. In the Old Testament the rite of admission was *circumcision*. Even children could not belong to the covenant of promise without circumcision; and adults were also to be admitted by this rite. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." And if any one neglected this sign of the covenant, "that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant"—or *neglected* my covenant; see the German translation. Gen. 17. No one, then, could be among God's people,

without having been regularly admitted by that rite which God had appointed as the rite of admission.

In the New Testament the initiatory rite is baptism. Christ himself submitted to it in order to fulfil all righteousness, and that He might leave us an example that we should follow in His footsteps. The command which He gave his disciples could not be plainer; "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to *observe all things* whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28 : 19–20. In Mark 16 : 16, we are told what the consequences will be if we refuse to submit to this order. He that would be wiser than God in this respect, and is determined to take his own way, must meet the consequences.

Not only have rites of admission been instituted, but Christ has absolutely declared

that every one who will be saved must publicly profess Him. Consider the solemn passage in Matt. 10 : 32, 33 : "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven." See also Luke 12 : 8, 9. The kind of confession here required is a public one, for it must be "*before men.*" Now, if Christ has instituted a Church, and also a rite, by which we are to be admitted into it, and we stand back from it, is not this denying our attachment to Him? We may regard ourselves as confessing Him out of the Church; but this is our way, and not God's way, and He will not own it. How can we better deny a government, than by publicly refusing to be a citizen. If Christ has a kingdom in the world, and we refuse to enter it, is not that the best evidence that we do not wish

Him to rule over us? Nothing can be plainer. Now Christ declares absolutely, and without any qualification, that such as deny Him in this way before men, them will He deny before God, and the angels.

The example of the first Christians.

The Third Argument.

We find that all those who became pious, under the preaching of Christ and His apostles, joined the Church immediately.

Those who believed in Christ joined themselves to Him and His followers. He enjoined it upon them to deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow Him. Matt. 16 : 24, He also declared that if any one refused to do this, he was not worthy of Him, and could not be His disciple. Matt. 10 : 38. Luke 14 : 27. They were not merely in a quiet and secret way to adopt

the truth, and practise religious principles alone and for themselves; but they were to profess themselves openly, always, in all places, and "before men," as adherents to Christ. It was the great sin of Peter that he denied that he was a follower of Christ, and refused to be openly considered as such.

The social nature of religion, the love which it inspired, as well as a hearty desire to join with their Head and Master in establishing a visible Church and kingdom of saints, lead them to draw towards each other in the sweetest and most intimate fellowship. Hence we find that, after our Saviour's death, "the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them." Luke 24: 33. Immediately after His ascension into Heaven, they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Acts 1: 14. On the day of Pentecost "they were

all with one accord in one place." Acts 2 : 1. After Peter's sermon, on that memorable day when many were pricked to the heart by the truth, "they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were *added unto them* about three thousand souls." Here we see how a public profession of religion immediately followed their belief in the truth; and it is added "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Thus then it appears quite evident that the early Christians joined the Church immediately; and it seems that none held back, for it is not said that only *some* of them did so, but "they that gladly received his word," did so. This also continued afterwards to be the case, for we are told that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2 : 41–47. It was a natural result: they that believed

in Him, and received His grace, united at once with the Church.

How then can any one doubt that it is our duty to make a public profession of religion by being "added to the Church." The example of Christians in the apostolic times, is as plain as sacred history can make it. That the apostles established Churches, with ministers to teach, and officers to rule, no one who is at all acquainted with the Scriptures can doubt. These Churches included all who professed to be friends of the Gospel. Piety, a public profession of religion by being added to the Church, and operating with it, was with them identical. Acts V. 11, VIII. 1—3, XI. 22—26, XII. 5, XIV. 23—27, XV. 22, XVIII. 12, XX. 28. Read these passages, and then decide whether you *can* be in sympathy of spirit with the disciples and early Christians, without being united with the Church. If you are

not like them on earth, can you expect to be with them in heaven? Show me a good man or woman in the whole Bible who was not a friend of the Church, and who did not belong to it. There were persons in the Church that were not pious—but were there any out of it that were pious? Do you say the thief on the Cross? I answer that it is doubtful whether ever he had an opportunity to profess Christ before; for it is not likely that he had ever seen Him till then; and, moreover, he did then confess Christ publicly, as publicly as possible; and expressed a desire to be with Him in His kingdom. Can you say that you have had no opportunity to make a profession of religion, when the Church stands with open doors before you, and when you are invited and warned, Sabbath after Sabbath, from the pulpit, and daily by your own conscience and God's providences?

Union with Christ is Through the Church.

The Fourth Argument.

It is necessary to be united with the Church, because, according to the Scriptures, *we are united to Christ through the Church.*

In order to convince ourselves of this, we need only look at the representations which are given in Scripture, of the union of Christ with His Church, and of the Church with her members. We find that this is set forth by the symbol of a human body.

Christ is the HEAD. The Church is the BODY. Christians are the MEMBERS of that body. This is seen in the following passages: "God has put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His

body." Eph. 1 : 22—23. Again : "And He is the head of the body, the Church." Col. 1 : 18. Now that Christians are united to Christ, their head, by being united with the body, is seen in 1 Cor. 12, where this matter is discussed at length.— "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Apostle then goes on to show, that as the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, as members of that body, have all different offices, and yet are pervaded by one life, so are all the different individual Christians joined in the same body, in Christ. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

The Apostle, in Eph. 4, 15—16, where he uses the same comparison, shows that we can only be joined with Christ, the head, and grow up in Him, by being joined with the Church, His body. We are to

"grow up in Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." See also Eph. 2 : 20—22, and 1 Cor. 10 : 17.

This is a solemn truth, and it ought to be well considered by all who are out of the Church. Out of the Church, according to the Apostle, we are like an arm, an ear, or an eye, out of the body—dead! The life of the Head does not flow into us, unless we are in the body. As the body is between the limbs and the head, so the Church is between the members and Christ; and we can only be joined with Him through the Church. In the Church is His spirit and His grace. In the Church are the means by which we are to seek and to find union with Him. In the Church

are His ministers to show the way to life; there are the sacraments as nourishment, as signs and seals of His grace; and there are all the ordinances adapted and designed to renew us into His image unto perfect men in Christ.

It is not necessary to discuss the question whether we can be Christians out of the Church. It is a useless question, and to such the Saviour Himself gave no answer. It is just as in that case where one came to Christ, and asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The Saviour answered his question by saying, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate!" That is as much as if he had said, You have more important matters to engage your attention;—whether few or many are saved, what is that to thee? See to it that *you* are saved. So here—if you ask, can no one be saved out of the Church? we an-

swer, You can be saved *in* the Church; see that you do not neglect it. This is the first duty which claims your attention. When you once feel yourself saved in the Church, rest assured you will have no desire to ask this question. When once happily housed in your Father's house, in joyful fellowship with his children, and feasting upon his grace and love, you will not ask whether one can enjoy the same blessings out in the cold and dreary barrens of the world.

It is, moreover, the same as if we should ask: Cannot the eye see, and the ear hear, when cut loose from the body? Cannot the branches bring fruit when cut off from the vine? Cannot the thirsty and hungry soul satisfy his wants away from the fountain of life, and away from the table which God has provided for His children? It is enough for us to know

that *God does not say that we can be saved out of the Church!* If we can be, he has not revealed the fact to us. He has nowhere advised us to stay out of the Church. He has nowhere promised us blessings for so doing. On the contrary, He has thrown all His exhortations, His warnings, His instructions, and His promises with awful solemnity on the other side. The Church is evidently His delight. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." The Church is the birth-place of the saints. "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there: all my springs are in thee." Ps. 87. See also Ps. 48.

As long as any one has no desire, and is not willing to join the Church, it is the best possible proof that he is not yet a Christian. For a desire and hope to be saved out of the Church, is a desire and hope to be saved out of God's way; and as long as any one is not willing to submit to God's will and way, his heart is not right with God. It is with him just as it was with Naaman; he wished to be cleansed of his leprosy, but not in the way which the prophet prescribed; but he was not healed till he took the prophet's way. 2 Kings 5. Refer to that chapter, and read it carefully; it furnishes a solemn lesson to all such as wish to be saved in their own way—out of the Church.

After God has established His Church on earth, after He has instituted its ordinances, after Christ has "given Himself for it," and preserved it amid the ragings

of the heathen, and the tumultuations of the world's history, for nearly six thousand years—after all this, it is next to blasphemy to say that we can be saved as well out of the Church as in it! What greater insult can be offered to God? and yet this is done in Christian lands, and with Bible in hand! Oh, human nature, how art thou depraved and fallen from God! How almost hopeless is human self-will and pride!

Let me beg you, my dear fellow-traveller to eternity, to consider well, before you peril your eternal interests upon such a frail hope. Behold now, "What confidence is this wherein thou trustedst? Thou sayest, I have counsel and strength for the war. Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it." 2 Kings 18–21.

You cannot obey Christ out of the Church.

The Fifth Argument.

It is the duty of every one to join the Church, because it is impossible to obey Christ in all things without it.

You will judge at once that we allude to the use of the Sacraments — Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Some persons make very light of these ordinances. To many they are but forms, which they think may easily be set aside. The chief reason why these ordinances are not more valued by them, is because they make so little of the Church in which they are administered. Let it be remarked, however, that those who place little value on these ordinances, have not the Saviour for their example. He did not only teach men to love God, and to serve Him with a sincere heart, but

He taught them also to attend to all the instituted ordinances of religion. While He lived upon earth, He was not only circumcised and baptized, but He attended upon every Jewish Passover that was celebrated in His time; and when He had instituted the Holy Sacrament of the Last Supper He partook of it with His disciples. This He did that He might fulfil all righteousness, and leave us an example, that we should follow in His footsteps. Away with that religion which does not lead us to the ordinances — it is not from Christ, our Saviour.

That it is the imperative duty of all who would be saved to be baptized, and to partake of the Lord's Supper, is as plain as it can be made in the Scriptures. Both are absolutely, and without condition, enjoined upon adults. "*Be baptized.*" Matt. 3 : 13. Mark 16 : 16. Acts 2 : 38–41. Acts 8 : 12. Acts 22 : 16. 1 Cor. 12 : 13. Gal. 3 : 27.

"*Do this in remembrance of me.*" Luke 22 : 19. Mark 14 : 22. Matt. 26 : 26. 1 Cor. 11 : 23–29. From these passages, and many more, it will be seen that the use of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are solemnly enjoined duties; and they dare not be neglected — they will not be neglected by a Christian. As long as they are neglected, it is the best possible sign that there is no piety in the heart. For how can piety exist without leading to obedience? The Saviour himself has said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." John 14 : 23. And again: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Verse 15. Listen also to John, the gentle and lovely disciple; how strongly does he express himself on this point: "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2 : 4. Hear that, all ye who say you love the Saviour, and have never yet obeyed His

dying command: "Do this in remembrance of me." Your hearts are deceiving you. There is no evidence on earth that can prove you to love Christ, as long as that love does not lead you to obedience. If an angel from Heaven (Gal. 1:8) should preach a different doctrine from that which is here so plainly taught, he is not to be believed. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3.

Thus, then, you see that to be a Christian it is absolutely necessary to obey Christ in the Sacraments. This you can only do by joining the Church; for Christ has appointed Officers, and made laws, in His Church; and those who will enjoy its privileges must submit to its rules. If there were no rules, so that any one, and every one, might come to the table of the Lord, there could be no order, and indeed no Church. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches

of the saints." 1 Cor. 14:33. Hence, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Verse 40. Hence, also, it is made the duty of the officers in the Church to guard its purity, and to exclude any who disgrace their profession. See 1 Cor. V. This order could not be kept up, were it not required that all who will partake of the ordinances in the Church, should connect themselves with it in a regular way.

You have now seen, that if we will be Christians we must use the Sacraments. You have seen also that these are in the Church, and can be allowed only to such as are regularly connected with it. Hence, in order to keep the Saviour's commandments, you must join the Church. Out of the Church, you are away from the Sacraments; and how can you be pious without a covenant, without means of grace, and without obedience?

It is your Duty to give your Influence to the Church.

The Sixth Argument.

It is your duty to belong to the Church, because it is only in this way that you can stand on the side of religion *in the eyes of the world.*

It will be in vain for you to say to others that you are a friend of Christ, of His Church, and its ordinances, as long as you stand out of its sacred enclosure. Your example will speak louder than your words; and those over whom your influence, in any way, extends, will do as you do, and not as you say. Thus, as long as you are out of the Church, the whole weight of your influence lies against it.

In this way vast injury is done by the silent, but effective, power of example. Especially do parents, in this way, by their

example, infuse into the minds of their children a secret disrespect for religion and its ordinances. There is not the least doubt that many children, growing up around uncovenanted parents, have been kept out of the Church and out of Heaven, just because they could silence the claims of religion upon them, by the example of parents. They may speak piously to their children, but what weight has that, so long as their own hearts are not led to obedience in what God requires of all in connection with His Church. The child will think thus: if you are sincere in speaking of the necessity of piety, why do not you profess it? It is natural for us to feel suspicious, when one points out to us a way, in which he is not himself willing to walk. It is only, then, by making a profession of religion yourself, that you can be considered on the Lord's side by others.

It is on this account that we are con-

stantly exhorted in the Scripture to separate ourselves from the world, and stand with the people of the Lord, on the Lord's side. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:14–18. Hence also we are "called to be saints" — that is, *holy ones:* not only holy ones in the sense of inward purity, but also in the sense of outward separation. The apostle, in 1 Peter 2:9, shows plainly that those who profess to be pious, ought to form a holy society, in in-

ward as well as outward fellowship with each other. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." He also points out the reason why they are thus called out from the world: "That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you from darkness into his marvellous light." How can our example tell upon others, as long as we are in position among them?—and how can we honor the Church, as long as we stand aloof from it. Or how can we be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people, as long as we are not separate from the world. We must stand out publicly on the side of the Church with those who "witness a good profession," and, in the face of the world, let our light shine. This alone can be properly called confessing Christ "before men," and letting our "light shine before men."

Let it not be forgotten that our *influence* is also a talent with which we must glorify God. You have influence; and how many perhaps are kept out of the Church by your example! How many perhaps would follow you if you made a profession of religion! And among those which you could draw after you, are your best friends—perhaps a wife, a husband, a sister, a brother, or children; for it is over these you have the most influence. Will you then go on in disobedience to the command of your suffering Lord, with so many hanging to your skirts, and following in the fearful wake of your influence and example into a hopeless grave!

This consideration appeals especially, with awful force, to such as have, on account of talents, learning, wealth, office or position, more than ordinary influence in society; and whose example has weight in the minds of many. "Have any of the

rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" This is the question which arises in the heart of many in the humbler walks of life, when the claims of religion are pressed upon them. If religion is so important, and if a connection with the Church is so indispensable, why do not all our Physicians, Lawyers, Legislators, and eminent men, become members of the Church? They are intelligent, and capable of weighing the claims of duty, and are we not safe in following their example. When they are sometimes almost overpowered by the excellency of the truth, and are inwardly moved to fall in with it, still the example, the apparent indifference of the "rulers," makes them waver; and, half in doubt whether they shall yield to inward conviction or trust to their examples, they ask: "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the Christ?" John VII.

We remember of having heard of an

eminent statesman who once offered 1000 dollars to any one who should reform his profligate son; but we did not hear that any one attempted to secure the prize. This could all have been spared, had the parent brought up his family in the Church, and under the trainings of grace, leading the way by his own example and influence. — Was it not natural that the son should have confidence in the example of so honored a parent, and thus be content out of the Church and covenant of God, in which alone there is safety? — Was it not natural for the son, when the claims of religion were presented, to ask: "Has my Father believed on Him?" Alas! if any one raise children in the uncovenanted wilds of the world, instead of the garden of the Lord, he must blame only himself if they turn out to be "degenerate plants of a strange vine." Themselves they must blame when at last they are forced to mourn

bitterly over their ruin, "O my son Absolom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Your Course would destroy the Church.

The Seventh Argument.

If all did as you do, there could be no Church and no public service in the world.

There can be no nation without citizens; and so there can be no Church without members. If all, therefore, stood aloof as you do, and refused to unite with others in keeping up the Church's eternal organization, it could not exist. True, this will never be—Christ will always raise up those who will sustain His Church; but so far as your influence and example reach, their direct tendency is to destroy the Church, for which Christ died. All that is neces-

sary to bring about this dreadful result is, that all others should think as you think, and do as you do. Then, soon, there would be no Churches, no public assemblies of God's people, no professing people of God crowding to the Sacramental Table to celebrate the Saviour's dying love, and obey His dying command. Do you desire to see such consequences? We cannot think so; and yet you are giving the full weight of your influence and example toward bringing about this result!

It is a true and a just rule: "We must do nothing ourselves which we would not be willing should become a general rule for all." Are you willing that the rule you adopt, and the course you pursue, should become the rule and course of all? Certainly you are not. It is doubtful whether you would advise your best friend, or your children, to do, in this respect, as you do. And if the whole world should suddenly

throw up their interest in the Church, and withdraw from it, you yourself would be alarmed. For certainly you acknowledge that Christ established a Church, and that it ought to continue to exist. Is it not then your duty to join it and to aid in keeping it up, just as much so as it is the duty of any one else.

Those, also, who now belong to the Church, could have offered the same objections, and made the same excuses, which you now present; and these excuses would have had just as much weight in their case as they have in yours. How plain is it, then, that it is the deceitfulness of the heart, the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and a wicked nature which is naturally averse to duty — it is these that keep you back from making a profession of religion, and from union with the Church. The Holy Scriptures tell us that "the heart is deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked." If we follow its suggestions, it will lead us astray. O do not entrust to it the decision of this solemn question.

It will do You great Good.

The Eighth Argument.

You ought to join the Church because of the excellent effect which it would exert upon you.

It would be a difficult and almost endless task, to exhibit all the good effects which will result to you from a right connection with the Church. They are as extensive and various as the influences of religion itself, which it is the great aim and end of the Church to beget and unfold in the heart and life of all. Many of its influences are so silent that they cannot be

traced in their details. Gently as the dew do its cheering, refreshing, and life-giving influences distil upon the heart; and it is because these influences are so gentle and silent, that they are so difficult fully to appreciate. "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Hos. 14: 5, 6, 7.

He that is in the Church, is as a plant in good soil — warmed by the sun of heaven, refreshed by its showers, and made glad in the smiles of the Lord. The silent but effectual manner in which those who stand in this kingdom of grace are pervaded and transformed by the power of grace, is beautifully set forth by the Saviour in some of His parables. The grace of Christ trans-

fuses itself like leaven. Matt. 13 : 33. It is also like a mustard-seed, which gradually and silently becomes a great tree from the smallest of seeds. Matt. 13 : 31, 32. And again : "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself — first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4 : 26–29. So silently, gradually, but surely, does the Church "bring forth fruit of herself;" and so rich is the harvest which those reap in the end who have been planted in this vineyard of the Lord.

The good effects which result from a regular connection with the Church, can be seen in many excellent specimens of

Christian character cultivated and perfected in its bosom. The finest specimens of human excellence which the world has ever seen, were in the Church. This would be seen and acknowledged more than it is, were it not that most of persons, in viewing the Church, fix their eyes first and only upon the Judases and Peters — who deny and betray Christ. Many a good ripe Christian lives and dies in the Church while no one says, "See a righteous man, let us imitate him;" but there are few hypocrites who are not pointed out by non-professors as standing arguments against the Church, which lead men to the awful and ruinous conclusion: "We are as good out of the Church as in it." But who will deny that the loveliest Christian characters in society are formed in the Church? We will venture the assertion, that if you will select from among your acquaintances five persons in whom you would repose un-

bounded confidence, — persons in whose hands you would entrust your property while you live, and your children when you die,—we will venture to say that those five persons are professors of religion. Many an aged patriarch have you seen, who had been "planted into the house of the Lord" in youth, nourished by the ordinances of the Church, and ripened for glory, till he was gathered "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." The community felt his loss; like Stephen of old, "devout men carried him to his burial, and made a great lamentation over him;" and, returning from his honored grave, many sighs were heard in the crowd: "A good man hath gone to his rest!"

How can it be otherwise than that union with the Church should have a blessed effect? There the heart finds in sabbatic hours, its quiet habitation. There God speaks, through His ministers, words of

instruction—words of admonition—words of exhortation—words of warning—words of promise and consolation. There the sacraments are dispensed—there His praise is sung—there prayer is addressed to Him who is the hearer of prayer, and the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him. It is the place which God has chosen for His peculiar dwelling-place on earth; and He is known in "her palaces for a refuge," as He is not known in all the earth beside.

I love her gates, I love the road;
The Church, adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God,
To show His milder face.

Who will deny that it has a good influence upon the heart to be in the Church; and, in covenant with God, to receive all the blessings which the covenant promises? It cannot be that you doubt this. If, then, the Church has such blessings in store,

why do you continue to deprive yourself of them? Why do you neglect them while they are passing so fast away, and will soon be beyond your reach forever. Is it thus that you will purchase for yourself bitterness on a dying bed, and eternal regret when the harvest is past, and the summer of life is ended? "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Look at the Solemn Consequences.

The Ninth Argument.

There is another reason why you should join the Church, closely allied to the one last mentioned. It is this: Not to unite with it will bring injury upon you, and,

through you, upon others after you; especially if you are a parent or ever will be.

All the good effects of which we have just spoken, you will of course lose. Being out of covenant with God, you cannot claim His blessings, and He is not pledged to bestow them. He gives you a thousand promises, if you will confess Him, and identify yourself with His Church, kingdom, and people; but not one promise, as long as you walk in disobedience. By looking at His dealings with His people in the Old Testament, you will see that He blessed those who were in covenant with Him; and forsook those who refused the covenant. Oh, what a lesson does the whole transaction of God with the Jews teach in this respect! The whole history of the Jews is a commentary on the covenant and promise: "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, *must needs be circumcised:* and *my*

covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." The whole history also of the unfaithful portion of the Jews, and of the uncovenanted nations around, is a commentary on the threat: "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin *is not circumcised*, that soul shall be *cut off from his people;* he hath broken my covenant." Gen. 17 : 13–14.

The same God still lives! He is still the same in His dealings with those that are in covenant with Him, and with those that are not. Though in the New Testament we have a "better covenant, which was established upon better promises," (Heb. 8 : 6) yet it is a covenant still; and those who would receive its blessing, must enter into covenant relations with God. In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, God stands before you, offering to confess you, if you confess Him. Listen to His gracious words: "I will dwell in them, and

walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6 : 16–18. This is God's offer to you. Thus He stands and pleads with a sinful worm!

"Oh how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!"

Will you die out of covenant with God? Will you die out of the Church? Will you die without any marks of sacramental blessings upon you? Will you die without some seal placed upon you by the hand of God Himself, giving you some comfortable encouragement to hope in His mercy?

Do you say you believe and hope in Christ? I answer, as we have already seen

in a former part of this treatise, graciously Christ is only in His Church. The Church is "His body." If you will be in Him, you must be in the Church, as members are in the body. If you obey Him not, in His ordinances, then you are none of His! Oh hear it, unless you obey Him, you are none of His! For He Himself says, "He that hath my commandments, *and keepeth them*, he it is that loveth me." "If a man love me, he will *keep my words*." His words are, "Do this in remembrance of me." His words are, "Confess me before men." You keep not His words, you obey not His commands—even not His dying command! Hear it: thus disobeying, you are not His!—you are not His! Out of the Church, without Baptism and the Lord's Supper—out of the Church, without a living union with the Head, through the body, you are a member cut off, and dead! Hear it, cut off and dead!

Are you a parent? Then in addition to the loss you yourself sustain, out of the Church, you make your children heirs of this loss. "Why did salvation come to the house of Zaccheus?" Luke 19. The answer is given by Christ Himself: "*Forasmuch* as he also is *a son of Abraham*." Here God remembered the covenant He had made with the parents of Zaccheus—that covenant included "their seed." Now Zaccheus shares its fruits. There were other houses in Jericho, but Jesus goes to the house of Zaccheus, because he also is a son of Abraham—and He took salvation with Him when He went! Here we see the benefit which children receive from the covenant relation into which they are placed by their parents. Have you no desire to secure them to your children; so that when you are dead, God may be the God of your offspring?

There is not the least doubt that many

children receive the gracious visits of God's grace by virtue of the fact that their parents were in covenant, and secured the covenant also to them. Neither is there any doubt, on the other hand, that many are lost, because they were not only left out of the Church by their parents, but encouraged to remain out by the full weight of their parents' influence and example. Left on the uncovenanted wilds of the world, without God and without hope, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," it is not strange that they first despise, then wander, and at last perish.

To illustrate this solemn and alarming truth we may refer to a fact, and there are many like it. Two brothers came from Switzerland, four generations back. The one was in the Church, and remained in it, a faithful member; bringing up all his

children in it. Piety is still honored in all the branches of that family in the fourth generation!

"If pure and holy is the root, such are the branches too."

The other became a sot, and of course cast off the covenant for himself and for his children. Not only his drunkenness, but the curse of being out of the Church can be distinctly traced in that family in the fourth generation! Such are the solemn and far-reaching consequences of our acts upon our posterity.

Will you, as a parent, take the dreadful responsibility of bringing up your children out of the Church, and confirm them in that position by the influence of your example? Look down the history of your own family through four generations,—think of the momentous consequences for good or for evil which you may entail

upon them, and then decide whether you will live and die out of the Church! Will you be the head of a stream of results, which will become wider, wilder, and darker, after you are dead, roll down its ever-increasing consequences into eternity, and cause you, when you meet them in the judgment, to curse the day in which you and they were born! Certainly this is something to be seriously thought of before it is too late.

We ought always to act as in view of death, and the judgment. These solemn realities are drawing nearer every day! Soon earth, with all its interests and cares, will recede from our dying vision. Oh! how bitter must the last hour be to us, if we have all our life lived in the neglect of what is so plainly our solemn duty, and blessed privilege! Let me beseech you, as you are about to close this book, to seek in the Church, the home of your spirit;

and you will find it, as the patriarch did, "the gate of Heaven." You will never obtain true rest and peace, till you find it in the bosom of the Church. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall behold Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." All else is unsettled and unstable. Empires fall, and nations die; one generation cometh and another goeth: families pass away from earth, and all flesh is as the grass before the scythe of the mower. All is restless and vanishing, but the firm foundations of the eternal Kingdom! Oh, seek rest in it.

People of the living God!
I have sought the world around;
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found;

Now to you my spirit turns,
Turns—a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, when your altar burns,
Oh! receive me into rest.

A HYMN.

I LOVE Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode;
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

If e'er to bless Thy sons,
My voice or hands deny,
These hands let useful skill forsake,
This voice in silence die.

If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her wo,
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cries and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy,
I prize her heavenly ways;
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Jesus, Thou friend divine,
Our Saviour, and our King,
Thy hand, from every snare and foe,
Shall great deliverance bring.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can yield,
And brighter bliss of Heaven.

THE END.

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